

THE
Harmony

OF THE 3.
Divine Attributes displayed
IN THE
Redemption and Salvation of Sin-
ners by JESUS CHRIST.

BEING
A SERMON

Preached at *Dunfermline*, upon the 9th of
September 1724, immediately after the
Celebration of the LORD's SUPPER,
from Psalm lxxxv. 10.

By the Reverend Mr RALPH
ERSKINE, late Minister of
the Gospel there.

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The Harmony, &c.

From PSALM lxxxv. 10.

Mercy and Truth are met together, Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other.

MY Friends; at a solemn marriage supper; there is usually a friendly company that meet together; and when at such an occasion, all things are managed with sobriety and decency, it is very heartsome and pleasant to the parties concerned, to see the members of the meeting, with mutual kindness to one another, harmoniously gracing the solemnity: Even so at the marriage supper of the Lamb. I mean, the sacrament of the Lord's supper, which we have been celebrating, there is a heartsome company, not of men and women, for that would make but a poor earthly meeting; nor yet of saints and angels, for that would make but at best a mean creature-meeting; but it is a glorious heartsome company of divine Attributes and perfection in the sweetest concord meeting together, and embracing one another. This wonderful conjunction, of divine excellencies is the friendly company that meets together, to put honour upon this nuptial solemnity; and to see them thus harmoniously embracing one another in the salvation of sinners is the sweetest sight that the Bride, the Lamb's wife shall ever see at the marriage supper, whether it be at the lower or upper table. There is a great meeting in this house, an infinitely greater, greater in this text; a meeting of divine excellencies, to grace the solemnity of the marriage supper of the Lamb, 'Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.' When God made heaven and earth out of nothing, he made them by a word without any other ceremony; but when he made man there was some particular solemnity, a grand council, as it were of the glorious Trinity called; Come 'let us make man after our likeness; and now, man have

man-made himself, if God had a mind, for the praise of his own glorious grace to make him up again by a new creation in Christ Jesus, there must be a more glorious solemnity yet; not only a council of the adorable Trinity, but a grand meeting of all the attributes of God, to consult their own glory that was married, and reconcile their own interest, and seemingly contradictory claims; for the sin of man had brought real confusion among all the creatures of God, on earth; yea, and a seeming war among all the attributes of God in heaven, concerning the execution of the sentence of the law upon mankind, the transgressor thereof. Some of these attributes, such as *Mercy*, saying, if the sentence of death be executed upon them how shall I be glorified? Others, such as *Truth* saying, if the sentence be not executed, how shall I be glorified. It is not to be expected that such opposites can meet together! Or if they meet, that they will agree together cordially; Yea, tho' it be beyond the expectation of men and angels, yet behold it is here celebrated with a song, 'Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.'

This Psalm consists of prayer, of faith, and an answer of peace. First the church prayer, from the beginning to the 8 verse, where they are praying for the removal of many tokens of God's displeasure they were under, notwithstanding of their return out of the *Babylonish* captivity. 1. The answer of peace that is made to their prayer, from verse 8 and downward, we have heard the Psalmist listening and waiting for the answer; 'I will hear what God the Lord will speak. The answer itself in general is peace, he will speak peace to his people,' &c. If he give not outward peace, yet he will suggest inward peace, speaking that to their hearts by his Spirit, which he had spoken to their ears by his word, whatever other sort of peace and prosperity they enjoyed, when at length the children of the captivity, after a great deal of toil, had gained a settlement in their own land, yet peace with God, and spiritual prosperity under the *Messiah's* kingdom, was the great thing here promised and prophesied of; and that is a peace that lays

the soul under the strongest obligation to stand a back from backsliding thereto, *but let them not return again to folly*: For true peace with God brings in war with sin. But this is farther explained in the main leading part thereof, namely salvation and glory, v. 9. *Surely his salvation is near to them that fear him, that glory may dwell in our land*. Now whatever other salvation be here imported, Christ is the great salvation intended; when he is near in view, then the believer cries out with old Simeon, *Now mine eyes have seen thy salvation*: And whatever any other glory and honour be here imported, Christ is the chief glory here intended: when he goes away from a land then *Ichabod*, the glory is departed, but where he abides, glory dwells; for he is called, *A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel*; but now, if we would know what sort of glory it is that appears when Christ is revealed, why, its even the glorious harmony of all the divine Attributes illustriously shining in him who is both our salvation and our glory. 'Mercy and truth are meeting together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other.' Now tho' these words may be applied to the happy meeting of grace in men, upon the revelation of Christ in the soul, which I may afterwards notice in the sequel, and in which sense some interpreters understand it, yet I take it mainly to import the happy meeting of perfections in God to be glorified in the sinner's salvation by Jesus Christ, which is a gloss that no interpreter I have had occasion to consult does neglect or omit: and if any of them should miss it, I think they would miss the very ground-work and foundation of all other happy meetings. 'Mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.'

In the words you may notice, 1st. The members of the meeting. 2^{dly}. The manner of the meeting.

3^{dly}, The harmony of the meeting. 4^{thly}, The strangeness of it.

Notice, I say, *First* the members of the meeting, *Mercy, truth, righteousness and peace*; I hope I need not caution some in this assembly that they beware of imagining these various perfections of God under the

name of *mercy, truth, righteousness and peace*, as if they were really distinct and different things in God; or, as they were really different parties making a formal consultation, in order to their agreement; for God is one, and cannot be divided, he is one infinite, eternal and unchangeable Being; there are not distinct and different things in this nature and essence; however his perfections be thus represented to our weak finite capacities which cannot understand the perfections of God, but several parts, as it were *By mercy*, then here we are to understand God himself, as he is a *merciful and gracious God*. *By truth* we are to understand the same God as he is a true and merciful God. *By righteousness* we may understand his justice, or God himself, as he is a just and righteous God: and by peace the same God, as he is the God of peace, and a God reconciling the world to himself. So that the whole comes to this, it is the great and eternal God himself, consulting with himself, in a manner becoming his infinite and adorable perfections, how to glorify himself in all his glorious attributes in the way of saving sinners, in and by Jesus Christ.

2. The manner of the meeting; these excellencies and perfections of God meet together, as it were in pairs, 'mercy and truth, righteousness and peace,' going hand in hand into the council-chamber, to concert the matters that concerned their highest glory and honour.

3. The harmony of the meeting, having met together, they kiss and embrace each other; mercy and peace, as it were, express their complacency in truth and righteousness: and truth and righteousness express their complacency in mercy and peace, and delight in one another's honour, for not one Attribute of the divine Majesty can, or will be glorified to the dishonour of any other Attribute, but mutually embrace each other in their everlasting arms, supporting the honour of each other's excellency with compleated inestimable endearments.

4. The strangeness and remarkableness of this meeting, for the agreement of these parties met together is the more remarkable in regard of their jarring and

opposite claims; for that mercy and peace shall meet together, and agree in favour to save us, and that truth and righteousness shall meet together, and agree in justice to destroy us, were not so strange and remarkable; and if they had kept such separate meeting, and remained at odds without meeting together, man had been forever separate from God, and some darling Attributes had never been glorified in man's salvation; our sin and rebellion having in a manner set the Attributes of God at such variance, as nothing else but infinite wisdom could provide a sufficient answer to all their contradictory claims and interest, which behoved to be done ere the proposal anent the salvation of any sinner could be gone into. Why, says mercy, it is my interest that the sinner live and not perish, that I may be magnified, since I have said, 'That I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy;' Well, but says truth, it is my interest as a God of truth, that the sinner die, since I have said, 'That the soul that sinneth shall die;' yea, and says righteousness, I must join with truth and claim the sinner's damnation, for the advancement of my interest and honour, for I have said and will not gainsay it, 'That I will by no means clear the guilty.' Oh! but says peace, I will join in with mercy, and claim the sinner's salvation, for advancing my interest, 'For who created the fruit of the lips, peace, peace to him that is afar off, and to him that is near?' So there appears to be a war in heaven among infinitely adorable Attributes and perfections, while mercy and peace are saying, we must have glory in having undeserved pity on the sinner, and yet truth and righteousness are saying we must have glory in executing the deserved vengeance. And now, O men and angels! will you tell, can these *Antipodes* meet together? Can these jarring like Attributes of the divine majesty embrace each other in the salvation of the sinner, so as to get all their demands answered and their different interests advanced. What say you children of men? Can you devise how these differences can be composed for your own safety? No, no, human wisdom says, it is not in me. What say ye angels?

that excel in strength and wisdom, can you contrive the reconciliation of these irreconcilable demands? No, no; angelical wisdom says it is not in me. Well, since creature wisdom fails, may we address the infinite wisdom of the Deity, and enquire at a higher hand; Behold, now we have taken upon us to speak unto the Lord, who are but dust and ashes. What sayest thou, O infinitely wise Jehovah? can these opposite claims be reconciled to the satisfaction of all parties, and the salvation of the sinner? Yes, it is done, it is done, it is done in a crucified Christ, whom we have been remembering at this solemnity; and therefore we may sing this marvellous Song upon the back of it saying, 'Glory, glory, glory to God, that mercy and truth are met together.'

Observation, That in the salvation of sinners by Jesus Christ the glorious Attributes and perfections of God do harmoniously conspire and embrace one another; or thus, that in Christ crucified for the redemption of sinners, all the glorious Attributes of the divine majesty do harmoniously conspire, and embrace one another.

When God is well pleased, no perfection of God is displeased; but God is well pleased in Christ, and therefore every perfection of his nature is well pleased, none of them displeased or dissatisfied, but all pleased and satisfied to the full; see Hosea ii. 19, 20. This is declared by an audible voice from heaven, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' Mat. iii. *last*. And why even for the reason you have, Isa. xlii. 21. We see he hath brought in a righteousness answering the demand of all that stood in the way of our salvation: Did divine truth and righteousness say, that the threatening of the law must be executed, so sure as God is true, as well as its precept, obtemperate and obeyed; Well can righteousness satisfying both these demands and do the business, Yea, says *justice* itself in concert with *mercy*, if there be but one righteous man in *Sodom* of this earth; that can satisfy my broken and violated law, in its command of perfect obedience, and in its demand of complete satisfaction: then I will spare all the elect world, for the sake of that one righteous man, and by his knowledge shall my righteous servants

justify many. Well says mercy, here is one whose name is Wonderful, and whom they call *Immanuel*, God-man; who hath brought in an everlasting righteousness, both active and passive, suiting the precept and penalty of the law: Why then might one Attribute say to another, we are pleased, and with one consent let it be proclaimed on earth that the Lord is pleased for his righteousness sake; for he hath magnified the law, and made it honourable. And now the great affair of man's salvation is so well concerted and contrived, that God may have mercy upon them, and be at peace with poor sinners, without any wrong to his truth and righteousness. The Attributes of God have met and agreed and sealed their agreement with a kiss of infinite kindness, harmony, and satisfaction. 'Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.'

Now I may speak to this purpose a little more fully, the method I propose is,

1. To touch a little at this question, who are the members of the meeting, of what are these Attributes of God, which do thus harmoniously conspire together, proposing their various claims.

2. I would enquire when and where it is that they meet together, and embrace one another.

3. How and after what manner it is that they meet together, and kiss one another.

4. Why, or for what reason it is that they have met together thus harmoniously.

5. Make some application.

1. I would speak a little to the members of this meeting of the Attributes of God that thus harmoniously conspire together. We need not ask at whose instance this meeting is called, it is at the instance and by the order of Jehovah; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God; his sovereign will and pleasure, resolving, in a manner like himself, to concert with himself; neither heed we ask, what is the occasion of the meeting, why man had sinned, and all mankind by their sin, was involved under the curse of the law, and wrath of God; and yet God hath resolved and declared, for the glory of his grace and mercy, to save a world of sinners, elect

according to the foreknowledge of God: And while *grace, mercy and peace* are upon this loving plot of saving sinners, it was fit that *justice truth and righteousness* should be called into the same council, to appear for their interest: since the proposal of such a salvation of sinners seems to encroach upon their honour, which required the vengeance due to be executed upon the sinner. Well, the meeting being called, compare these glorious perfections. 'Mercy, truth, righteousness and peace,' mercy and peace full of pity, truth and justice full of fury, which made a seeming controversy in heaven. We may suppose *Adam* arraigned in the name of all mankind, and standing as a trembling pannel; yea, his very tongue chained up in silence, by reason of sin and guilt, sentenced to eternal death, and ready to have the sentence executed upon him and all his posterity. We may suppose next, the several members of the meeting opening the assembly, by putting in their several claims; and we may notice them in the order of the text.

1. *Mercy*, being full of pity towards the miserable, comes walking along in the cool of the evening, and meekly craving leave to speak; notwithstanding that *truth and justice* be present at the meeting. It is true, says *mercy*, that man hath sinned, and just that man should die; but art not thou, O Lord full of pity and compassion, 'The Lord, the Lord, God pardoning iniquity, transgression and sin.' What tho' man hath sinned, and is all over besmeared with mire and blood, yet look upon him in love, and destroy not the works of thy own hands; he was made a child after thy own image, tho' now his garment be rent and all bloody; yet see, is not this thy Son's coat? *Joseph* is gone, and wilt thou lose *Benjamin* also? Angels are gone, and shall men be lost also? Miriads of Angels are fallen, and that irrecoverably, and shall man perish also? O spare him? is he not a little one? and his soul shall live. I see, might *mercy* say, that *truth righteousness or justice*, which have the poor sinner in their chains, are here present ready to speak in this assembly for their interest and honour against criminals: But let it be marked in the minutes of this court, that

mercy craves to be magnified, and must have honour at this meeting, well, mercy having spoken her mind,

2. *Truth* comes in naked and open-mouthed, in favours of God's faithfulness, and in opposition to man's perfidy and treachery, saying, I have heard what mercy craves in favour of this criminal; But O thou faithful and true God! The word is gone out of thy mouth, and there is no revoking of it: 'Thou hast said to *Adam*, in 'the day thou eatest thou shalt surely die,' and now he hath eaten, he hath sinned, and shall he not die? What, is there yea and nay with God, who hath faithfulness for the girdle of his loins, must not God's word of threatening take effect; *Yea heaven and earth shall pass away, but a jot of his word shall not fall to the ground*: And therefore, whatever be the demand of mercy, let it be marked in the records of this meeting, that truth craves to be magnified, and that its honour be not infringed in the least by any claim or plea that mercy hath brought in. Well, truth hath spoken, gives way to her sister justice; and thereupon,

3. Righteousness or justice comes in and pleads against the rebel sinner: Righteousness, I say, bringeth her scale in her hand, in which she hath tried him, and found him lighter than vanity itself; he is weighed in her balance and found wanting: yea, not only wanting and destitute of all that perfection and obedience that the law required, but full of all that rebellion which the law discharged, having sinned, and come short of the glory of God: and so is righteously subjected to the sanction of the law and sentence of eternal death; And therefore, says righteousness, O thou infinitely righteous and just judge, mercy can have no hearing in this court, to the prejudice of thy honour and glory, as a just and righteous God, as truth has pronounced the sentence of wrath and vengeance against sin: so, if thou be a just God, thy infinite vengeance due to such an infinite evil must be executed to the full: This pannel is my prisoner, and loosed he shall not be till I get full satisfaction, and my sword be drunk with blood, for *vengeance is mine, and I will repay it saith the Lord*: and I will by no means clear the guilty. And therefore let it be registrate in this court.

that righteousness craves to be magnified, and justice to be glorified in a full satisfaction; and this is claimed and demanded in the name of the righteous and just judge of the universe; and shall not the judge of all the earth do right! Here is the language of justice. What then? O shall the demand of mercy be utterly run down by these powerful opposing pleas of *truth* and *righteousness*? is there no friend in this court to take *mercy's* part; yea, there is, therefore,

4. *Peace* immediately steps in with an olive branch in her hand, saying fury is not in me, and may I speak a word in behalf of forlorn mankind? May I offer a meek answer to the claim of *truth* and *righteousness*, which they have advanced in opposition to the demand of *mercy*, for a *soft answer turneth away wrath*. Well, *peace* being allowed a hearing, proposes a healing overture, saying, O thou God of peace! may not an atonement be made, a reconciliation thought of betwixt thy Majesty and thy creature, may not one be found out to stand in the gap and bear off this wrath, to become surety for this great debtor, to acquit and liberate this poor miserable prisoner and criminal? may not one be found out that will make up the breach, by vindicating the honour of *truth*, and satisfying the demand of *justice*; and so making way for the claim of *mercy*, and then all difference may be peaceably composed, so as we may harmoniously agree, and kiss one another: O! may not then a peace-maker be found out in whom we may find all our demands satisfied at once, without prejudicing one another; why, if such an one can be found, surely his name shall be called *Wonderful, counsellor, the Prince of peace*. Well, the overture and proposal of peace being recorded among the rest of the archives of the glorious court, and if being such a peaceable overture, no member of the meeting could disapprove it; But the great question then is, how it could be effectuate, for if one man sin against another, a man might determine it; but if a man sin against Jehovah, who shall intreat for him? for when infinite majesty is offended, who among finite creatures is able to satisfy it; or, 'What can counter-
vail the king's loss? wherewith then shall he come

' before the Lord, or bow himself before the Most High
 ' God? Will thousands of rams do it, or ten thousand
 ' of rivers of oil, or the fruit of the body, for the sin of
 ' the soul?' No, no, sacrifice and offering thou wouldest
 not, for it is impossible that the blood of bulls or of
 goats should take away sins. *Heb. x. 5.* What then,
 will angels become surety for the sin of man? No, no,
 tho' they had a will they have not power, they have but
 oil enough in their vessels for their own lamps. What
 then shall be done? Why might peace say, let us not
 stand in a demure, we have infinite wisdom here pre-
 sent with us at this meeting, let us hear her judgment
 anent this peaceable proposal, if it be possible that such
 a person can be found, in whom we may harmoniously
 center at last. Then wisdom sits down upon the privy
 council bench, and being full of eyes, does gravely de-
 termine this doubtful case with a happy issue. It is
 expedient, says wisdom, *That one die for the people,*
 that the whole nation of mankind perish not, but he
 must be such a righteous one that can justify many;
 yea, he that will undertake this, must be finite, that
 he may die, and infinite that he may conquer death,
 and satisfy infinite justice; but lo, there is none such to
 be found among all the creatures that ever God made,
 neither can such an one be found unless the Son of
 God himself, the second person of the glorious Trinity
 shall be pleased, by an unspeakable mystery, to become
 flesh, made of a woman, ' Made under the law, to re-
 ' deem them that are under the law, that they may re-
 ' ceive the adoption of sons,' *Gal. iv. 4.* That so, when
 he that hath no sin shall become sin for man; man who
 hath no righteousness, ' may become the righteousness
 ' of God through him,' *2 Cor. v.* last and thus mercy
 may be magnified, truth justified, righteousness cleared,
 justice satisfied, peace concluded: and all contented.
 Wisdom having determined how this proposal of peace
 might be effectuate, all parties hearkened, as it were
 with pleasure and willingly subscribed to the happy
 overture, and then heaven and earth conspired together
 in solemn thanksgiving, saying, ' Glory be to God in
 ' the highest, on earth peace, and good will towards

'men.' Thus the jarring Attributes of God are now reconciled, and behold, the members of the meeting that seemed to be at the greatest variance, are embracing one another in their arms, *Mercy and truth are met together; &c.*

The second thing was, when and where did these blessed parties meet together? when we speak of a remarkable meeting, it is usual to enquire into the time and place of the meeting; Now the place where and the time when, as to this wonderful meeting, are two questions, which I put together, for they may be both answered at once, because of their near relation.

1. Then in general, the meeting place, or place of the meeting is Christ, and time of the meeting was when Christ put himself in our room, or substitute himself in the place of the sinner, to answer the demand of all the members of the meeting that had any objection against our salvation, or any thing to lay to our charge; where then, and when did they meet together and kiss each other? Why, it was even in Christ, when he took our law-room to pay our debt, and purchase our liberty in such a manner, as mercy and peace might have their interest advanced, without injury to truth and righteousness, that mercy might vent to the credit of truth, and peace might be proclaimed to the honour of righteousness, and the sinner saved to the satisfaction of justice. They meet together, and embrace each other in him, as the surety, 'The surety of the better Testament,' *Heb. vii. 22.* We were debtors to the mandatory and minatory part of the law, arraigned at the instance of divine justice to pay the debt. Christ substitutes himself in our room, comes under the law to pay the whole debt: it is true, the debt was personal, and justice had a demand upon the person that sinned, by virtue of the covenant of works, but that covenant never excluded a surety, though it provided none. The law promised life upon our personal obedience, but in case we fail it revealed no surety to make out an obedience in our room: there behoved indeed to be a secret reserve in the covenant of works, whereby the perfect obedience of another was not excluded: For if the co-

covenant of works had absolutely excluded a surety in our room, then the covenant of grace had been excluded, and our salvation had been impossible, after our fall; but tho' the covenant of works did not exclude a surety, yet that covenant did neither provide nor reveal a surety. This is done in the covenant of grace, which is Christ, as surety, fulfilling for us the covenant of works, in all the articles of it. Now, is truth and faithfulness at any loss here? No, the truth of the promise and threatening both, of the law of works is fulfilled. On the one hand, the promise of eternal life made to perfect obedience, which tho' we forfeited in our own person, yet we recover in the person of Christ: the promise of life, upon the ground and condition of perfect obedience, being fulfilled to us in him, who hath yielded that perfect obedience in our room. On the other hand, divine truth and faithfulness, in the threatening of the law, which was death, is glorified in that it is fulfilled upon the surety; while we, who came under the sentence of death in the first *Adam*, undergo that death in the second; Again, is righteousness and justice at any loss by this surety in our room? No, no, whither we look upon it as vindictive or retributive justice; vindictive justice is displayed in its outmost severity upon Christ; 'Awake, O sword against my Shepherd, and the man that is my Fellow.' And so the sword is drunk in his Blood, to infinite satisfaction. Retributive justice is gloriously displayed also in the sinners being rewarded, justified, saved, upon this ground. It is true, might justice say, I could have demanded satisfaction upon the sinner himself in his own person, but as I can sustain no injury to my honour by such a surety as this, whom they call *Immanuel*, God-man, so I find my honour and interest, instead of being impaired, is advanced by this exchange of persons, for tho' I should damn the sinner to all eternity, I'll never get such full and complete satisfaction upon any finite creature, as I will get by one stroke of my avenging sword upon that person of infinite dignity: and 'so it pleased the Lord to bruise him.' Why then, 'they meet together and embrace one another in him,' as surety, and if truth and righteousness

be both pleased to the full, the parties cannot but all agree, and embrace each other. Again they meet together and embrace one another in him, as a sacrifice, 'A sacrifice and offering of a sweet smelling savour, unto God, Eph. v. 2. *why*, He offered up himself by 'the eternal Spirit,' O great! Even by his eternal God-head; a valuable sacrifice indeed! They meet together in him as a propitiation, Rom. iii. 25. *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation thro' faith in his blood to declare his righteousness, &c.* Behold him righteous in shewing mercy, here is the atonement, the propitiation, that very word which the Septuagint calls the mercy-seat in the Old-Testament: and it is the word that the poor publican made use of when he was seeking mercy, saying, *God be merciful unto me a sinner.* He had mind of this, this mercy-seat and propitiation, it is not simple mercy that he sought, but mercy through a propitiation: he looked to the blood of atonement to the sacrificed Lamb of God, saying, Give me mercy for this, by that solemn propitiation, be thou propitious to me. Here it is that mercy and justice meet together: they meet together in him as a ransom, Job xxxiii. 24. deliver his soul from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom.

[No. II.]

THE

HARMONY

OF THE

DIVINE ATTRIBUTES.

From PSALM lxxxv. 10.

Mercy and Truth are met together, Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other.

IN a word they have met together, and kissed one another in a crucified Christ, whose death was the payment of our debt, the punishment of our sin, the price of our redemption, and a purchase of our life, liberty,

and eternal salvation. Here is the meeting place then of these glorious perfections of God : here is the person in whom they center, that they may be all glorified to the highest, mercy, truth, righteousness and peace, all are pleased, Mercy is gratified, and constitutes him to be the mercy-seat. Truth is satisfied, and centers in him as the way, the truth and the life. Righteousness is contented, and declares him to be the Lord, our righteousness. Peace is perfected, and proclaims him to be the Prince of peace; yea, not only are all the members of the meeting pleased and satisfied for themselves, in the advancement of their own particular interests but they are infinitely well pleased in each other; and that the interests of their seemingly opposite parties, are advanced; as well as their own particular claims. Mercy is pleased that truth hath got all its demands, and truth is pleased that mercy hath got all her desire, and righteousness is pleased that peace is proclaimed; and peace is pleased that righteousness is honoured. Mercy and peace rejoice that they are magnified to the infinite glory of truth and righteousness, and truth and righteousness rejoice, that they are glorified to the infinite pleasure of mercy and peace: and hence they not only meet together, but kiss one another. Here you see where they meet together. So much for an answer thereto more generally.

i. More particularly, as to the meeting time, you may take these following particulars for further clearing of it. Although this blessed meeting, once taking place, is still continued, and so cannot be said properly to adjourn from time to time, and from place to place; for this assembly never dissolves, yet in a suitableness to our weak capacity and finite understanding, which cannot rightly conceive of a meeting that never had a time to meet, because they met in eternity, and never shall have a time to part, because they meet to eternity. We cannot conceive of it, I say but by taking it, as it were, into so many parts, or considering it in so many periods, and there are these eight remarkable periods, wherein mercy and peace meet with truth and righteousness and kiss each other.

1. The first remarkable period is this, they meet together at the council table of the covenant of redemption, from all eternity, before ever the foundation of the world was laid, ere ever the morning stars sang together, Mercy and Truth met together, Righteousness and Peace kissed each other, for the council of peace did then meet, Zech. vi. 13 and all was concerned by infinite wisdom, how Mercy should be magnified, Truth cleared, Righteousness vindicated, and Peace concluded, and all in Christ, who according to the tenor of that covenant whereof the covenant of grace is but a transcript) was to give his soul an offering for sin, and then was to see his seed and the pleasure of the Lord to prosper in his hand. Then it was that this pleasant meeting in him was first constitute, as you may see, Prov. viii. 30, 31. he being set up from everlasting, ere ever the earth was; God in all his glorious perfections was delighted in him and in him his delights were with the sons of men. This was the grand meeting, at which the time and place of all the subsequent meetings were concerted, and all the other particulars we are to mention are but the result of this, and as it were emanations therefrom; for it is a meeting that never dissolves, tho' in several periods it appears like a new meeting unto me. Therefore,

2. Another remarkable period is their meeting together in the garden of *Eden* after man had made himself naked and obnoxious to the flaming sword of divine justice. Mercy comes walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the guilty pannel being examined in open court; behold, Mercy and Truth meet in the happy sentence that was pronounced, 'The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent,' Gen. iii. 15. Behold righteousness and peace kiss one another in the righteous vengeance that was to execute upon the devil and his works, in order to effectuate a happy peace betwixt God and man. This meeting was gradually cleared up under the Old Testament: and in the legal sacrifice, pointing out the great propitiatory sacrifice.

3. Another remarkable period is their meeting together at *Bethlehem Ephrath* upon Christ's incarnation, Micah v. 2, 4, 5, &c.

4. Another remarkable period is their meeting together at the banks of *Jordan*, when Christ was baptized, Mat. iii. 13, 16, 17, &c.

5. Another remarkable period is their meeting together in the garden of *Gethsemane*, when Christ being in agony, did sweet great drops of blood under the pressure of avenging justice, every drop of blood was an ocean of mercy, and while he was prest in the wine-press of God's wrath, Mercy was expressed. No mercy to Christ, for God spared not his own Son, even when he cried, mercy, mercy, God's mercy, saying Father, if it be thy will, remove this cup from me. No, no mercy was shown to him, otherways no mercy had been shown to us, justice must have its due from him, that mercy might vent towards us; and so here Mercy and Truth meet together.

6. Another remarkable period is their meeting on mount *Calvary* where Christ was crucified. It was upon the cross of Christ that mercy and truth met together, that righteousness and peace kissed each other; for there it was that he paid all the elect's debt to the last farthing that Truth and Righteousness could demand, until *He cried with a loud voice, and said, it is finished.* Having done all that the law could enjoin, he suffered all that the law could threaten; so as it cannot crave a farthing more. It is finished all that was stipulated for with the Father in that federal transaction, all that was promised in that eternal compact is finished, every article agreed to in the council of peace was finished. The bargain that he had signed was with his hand, he now sealed with his blood; and in this appearance upon the cross, or in his obedience to the death did all the Attributes of God meet, as in a centre; and on this account was mount *Calvary* more glorious than mount *Sinai*; for in mount *Sinai* God appeared in his terrible majesty, making the mountain to tremble and the earth to shake; but here in mount *Calvary*, he appeared not only in his terrible majesty, but in his tender mercy; in his terrible fury against sin, and in his tender favour towards the sinner: and now, the controversy betwixt justice and mercy seems at a crisis; here was the critical juncture, wherein their different demands behoved to be decided; and it was done with

such a solemnity as made the whole universe, as it were to tremble and quake: for then did God shake, not the earth only, but also the heaven: for when Christ was under the mighty load of terrible wrath in the sinner's room, there was a great earthquake, and the heavens grew black, the sun was eclipsed; and that at a time contrary to the common rules of nature, which made a *Heathen* philosopher at a distance, cry out, 'that either the frame of nature was on the point of a dissolution or the God of nature was suffering.' And indeed he was suffering unto blood and unto death. Behold the living and eternal GOD here in our nature wounded to death; and bleeding out his life, to be a sacrifice for sin that justice might be satisfied, and mercy might be magnified and all the Attributes of GOD glorified to the highest. O wonder! that *Golgotha*, the place of a scull should be such a famous meeting place for the divine perfections. It was a place of the greatest shame and ignominy, but in him 'who endured the cross, and despised the shame,' it was made a place of most resplendent glory; for on the cross of Christ, Mercy and Truth, Righteousness and Peace met and embraced each other. God's Attributes did harmoniously join together, so that the one does not blacken, but illustrate the glory of the other; while they shined gloriously in the face of Christ crucified, as a beautiful and bright constellation; for he was set forth to be a propitiation to declare the righteousness and justice of God, together with his other glorious names.

7. Another remarkable period is their meeting together at the bar of GOD's great justice court in heaven, 'within the vail, whether the forerunner hath for us entered, even Jesus,' Heb. vi. last. When Christ was upon the cross, 'The vail of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom;' and a way was made for entering into the holy of holies; and as the priests under the law were not only to offer the sacrifice without the camp, but after that, were to enter the holiest of all, not without blood, but with the blood of the sacrifice, 'to sprinkle the mercy-seat, Lev. xvi. 14, 15.' Even so Christ having offered himself a sacrifice, and

' suffered without the gate, Heb. xiii. 12. He is entered
 ' into the holy place by his own blood.' Heb. ix. 12.
 there to appeal as our high priest in the power and vir-
 tue of his blood, to make a full atonement, and sprinkle
 the mercy-seat. Hence believers are said ' to be come
 ' to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the
 ' blood of sprinkling,' and where is this? Even in hea-
 ven as you see in the context, Heb. xii. 23, 24. ' Now
 ' in this work Christ carried the price of his blood into
 ' the very presence of God for us,' Heb. ix. 24. and paid
 it down before him; and in this act, justice hath its satis-
 faction brought home, and by this act, Mercy and justice
 actually are met; for hereby Christ sprinkled the very
 mercy seat with blood, all over, both upon it, and before
 it, as the forecited Lev. xvi. represents: For the mercy-
 seat of old stood so, that it could be seen but two ways,
 namely, upon it and before it, and as a table next to the
 wall, and so this points out, that what ever way we look
 to mercy by faith, we may see mercy and blood mixt,
 Mercy and justice met together, and all sorts of mercy
 conveyed thro' the blood of Christ, top mercies, and side
 mercies, upper mercies of a spiritual nature, and lower
 mercies of a temporal nature, for the mercy-seat is
 sprinkled with blood upon it, and before it, and what-
 ever way you look to it. The sacrifice was finished
 on the cross, and all sacrifice finished therein, but the
 blood of the sacrifices behoved also to be carried within
 the vail in order to the full atonement, that which was
 written in blood upon the cross, might be sealed in the
 presence of God at the heavenly bar; and we act not our
 faith far enough for redemption, unless we follow Christ
 from the cross to the bar of God's justice court in heaven
 to see all sealed and secured there within the vail, where
 this blood is exposed as it were, and pled at the bar:
 where ' Mercy and Justice met together, and embrace
 ' each other.'

8. Another remarkable period is their meeting toge-
 ther at the bar of conscience, God's lower court on the
 day of actual reconciliation betwixt God and the sinner;
 For then, *the blood of Christ, who through the eternal
 Spirit, did offer himself without spot to God, doth purge*

the conscience, Heb. ix. 14. *And the blood of sprinkling, wherewith the conscience is purged from dead works to serve the living God,* doth put forth its purgative power and virtue by a certain internal speech; and what doth it speak in the conscience? *It speaks better things than the blood of Abel,* that speaks vengeance, but this speaks Mercy and Peace, in conjunction with Truth, Righteousness, and justice; For wherever justice satisfying blood cries for Mercy and Peace, there *Mercy and Truth Righteousness and Peace meet and embrace each other.* This blood is the cement whereby they are joined together: before this blood be applied, the conscience of the convinced sinner is all in a flame like mount Sinai; Thunder and lightning, and smoke and darkness and the fear of hell and vengeance, compassing the soul about while it is arraigned at the instance of the fiery law, to pay the double debt to the mandatory and minatory part of the law, that is perfect obedience upon the pain of eternal death and damnation. The sinner finds himself lost and undone for ever by the law: but then, when ever the blood of sprinkling comes in, and appears at the bar of conscience it speaks better things; it is a better speaker than the law: And what says it? Why, the language of it is, with your leave, O law, you have nothing to crave, for Christ the Son of God was arraigned at the instance of divine justice, to pay all this debt, because he was the sinners surety and substance, and he actually paid it, by obeying the command, and undergoing the penalty of the law; and for this I produce the ancient records of God, *In the volume of his book, it is written of Christ, that when sacrifice and offering would not. He said, Lo, I come, I delight to do thy will: and that the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all, That he was made a curse for us, yea, that he was made sin for us even he who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in him:* And therefore, O law, though thou hast Truth and Righteousness on thy side, yet Truth and Righteousness have met with Mercy and Peace, and they have concerted matters and agreed harmoniously, and kissed one another, in token of their full agreement in Christ, so that in Christ all charges are answered, and

thus in the believer's conscience all parties meet together.

3. The third thing proposed, was how and after what manner is it, that they meet together, and kiss each other. We are to conceive of it after the manner of God; for it is more than a meeting of saints, it is more than a meeting of angels, it is a divine meeting of all the glorious Attributes of God, and we may notice these following qualities of it.

1. It is a wonderful and mysterious meeting, it is above our comprehension; O how wonderful a meeting is this! The very *name of the person*, that is made the trisling place, the meeting place is called *wonderful*, Isa. ix. 6. Because the meeting is about us, *His name is called Immanuel, God with us*, O how mysterious in this meeting! *Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. That is all the Attributes of God meeting together, and harmoniously embracing one another in the eternal Son of God, who hath assumed our nature into his own personality; this is the most wonderful mysterious meeting that ever was in heaven or earth.

2. It is a joyful meeting, they meet with infinite pleasure and satisfaction in one another. *Behold my Servant, whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth*, Isaiah xlii. 1. As the perfections of God are glorified in Christ, so they rejoice and are delighted in him, *For Jehovah is well pleased for his righteousness sake, and therefore the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand and he shall see the travel of his soul and be satisfied*. Surely, if God hath his pleasure, and Christ his satisfaction, no Attribute of the divine majesty, no member of the meeting is displeased or out of humour; no, no, *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased*. My justice is pleased, my mercy is pleased, and all my other Attributes are pleased. O it is a heartsome pleasant and joyful meeting! may all that hear me be well pleased to see it, no joyful meeting, but what hath respect to this.

3. It is a holy meeting; Some meetings among men that are called heartsome meetings, yet are very unholy

and sinful meetings, but here is an infinitely holy meeting, *Holiness to the Lord* is the motto of it. A meeting of holy saints and holy angels is not such a holy meeting as this meeting of the holy Attributes of God to advance the great design of infinite holiness: All the holy meetings that ever were or will be, are the result of this, and the effect of some portion of holiness sent from it, for all holiness issues from it. Here Mercy and Truth meet together in a holy manner, Righteousness and Peace salute each other in a holy way, and greet one another with a holy kiss.

4. It is a happy meeting, all happiness and blessings flow from this meeting; Christ the meeting place is the center of all spiritual blessings, Eph. i. 3. Many unhappy meetings have been in the world since sin entered into it, and sinful unholy meetings are always miserable and unhappy meetings, but this holy meeting must be a happy meeting, and this holy kiss must be a happy kiss. If Mercy and Truth had not met together, we had never met with God, if righteousness and peace had never kissed each other, we had never got a kiss of the fair face of the Son of God, nor never been taken into the divine embraces.

5. It is a free meeting, Mercy and Truth met together freely, without being constrained, Righteousness and Peace kissed each other freely, without being forced. No motive from without could ever take place to move God to call this meeting from eternity: it was according to his own purpose and grace, which is given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. 2 Tim. i. 9. Free sovereign grace is the original of the meeting. It is also such a free assembly, where every member might freely speak, and not one to interrupt another, as is usual in meetings among men, where some cry one thing, and some another, in a confused manner, like that assembly, Acts xix. 32. where it is said, *The assembly was confused, and the greater part knew not wherefore they were met together, and some cried one thing, and some another.* No, this meeting is free in opposition both to all constraint and compulsion from without, and to all confusion and commotion from within; where sovereign free

grace is the master conveener, there can be no compulsion, and where the God of order is the great manager, there could be no confusion, and where the God of peace was all in all, there could be no dissention. Therefore,

6. It is a harmonious meeting, whatever different claims and pretensions the members of the meeting seem to have, yet they harmoniously concur in advancing one another's honour and glory, and hence, as they mutually meet together, so they affectionately embrace one another; there was no discord at this assembly, no proper variance or striving for state, but gloriously conspire with joint hearts and hands, to glorify each other in the salvation of a company of sinners by Jesus Christ. The divine essence is undivided, *and as there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Spirit, and these three are one.* So the Attributes of God, however manifold to our apprehension, yet there is no division among them, they are all one, and their conspiring together in Christ for our redemption, is called *manifold wisdom of God*; The manifold perfections of God meet together in one, with one consent and with one heart. Behold Mercy and justice in one another's arms: and so close is the embracement, that they are just one: Tho' it is a full meeting, and all parties present, yet there is no war, no jar, no dissention, no division, but all harmony and concord, and love and affection: it is the most peaceable meeting that ever was. And yet,

7. It is a bloody meeting and never was, and never will there be such a bloody meeting in heaven or earth, the mercy-seat must be sprinkled with blood, Mercy cannot be vented without blood, Truth cannot be cleared without blood, Righteousness cannot be vindicated without blood, and Peace cannot be purchased without blood; *without shedding of blood there is no remission*, no mercy to be vented, no peace to be proclaimed, *Christ hath made peace by the blood of his cross*, Col. i. 20.—*A bloody husband hast thou been unto me*, said Zipporah; but O how much more may Christ say, a bloody meeting hath this been unto me! *Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah*, Isa. lxiii. 1. Why, what is the matter that this garment is dyed with blood?

Why? when Mercy and Truth met together, they pressed to be so near one another in him, that they pressed the blood out of his veins, and so it was a bloody meeting: and when Righteousness and Peace kissed each other, it behoved to be in Christ, and so the sword of justice behoved to pierce him thro' and through that so these sacred lips might meet and kiss each other in his heart, and so it was a bloody kiss; they kissed each other with such good will; that Christ was as it were, bruised betwixt their lips, that the blood might cement and glue them together. One would think, such a bloody kiss would be no pleasant kiss; nay, but *it pleased the Father to bruise him*, they met together on a sea of blood: Thus it was a bloody meeting. Again,

8. It is an efficacious meeting, many meet and assemble together, and yet do nothing for their meeting, it is to no effect; but here Mercy and Truth meet together efficaciously, co-operatively, all is done at the meeting, that God proposed to be done, and all is done that concerns the glory of God and salvation of man; their meeting together, is their working together, and that to perfection, *For God the Lord is a rock, and his work is perfect*. Their meeting together, is their building together, Psal. lxxxix. 2, 3. *I have said mecca shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens*. There is Mercy and Truth both a building, and the foundation of the building is laid in Christ. *I have made a covenant with my chosen*, &c.

9. It is an unexpected meeting, it is beyond the expectation of men and angels. If friends and intimates should meet, and salute one another, it would not be surprising; but to see opposites, Antipodes, and Antagonists meet together and embrace each other, this were surprising and unexpected; so to see light and darkness, love and enmity, life and death meeting, how unexpected were that? Thus it is here, Mercy and Truth, Righteousness and Peace, these Attributes of God, with respect to us, were opposites and Antipodes. The language of Truth and Righteousness is death and damnation to the sinner, the language of Mercy and Peace is life and salvation to the sinner; and when a sinner finds

himself pursued to death at the instance of divine justice, and the truth and veracity of a God engaged against him, according to the threatening of the law. O how unexpected a rencounter is it? when he finds Mercy and Peace meeting with Justice and Truth and stopping the pursuit, according to the promise of the gospel to the credit of the opposite parties, *saying, d liver his soul from going down to the pit : I have found a ransome, and so all odds are made even, all opposites reconciled, to the infinite surprise, and beyond the expectation of all created beings. No wonder then, upon this meeting discovered, the poor soul cries, Is this the manner of man, O Lord? O who is like unto thee! Nay, there is none like unto th. God of Jeshurun, that rides on the heaven for their help, and in his excellency on the skies.*

10. It is an everlasting, indissolvable meeting, other meetings will adjourn their meetings from time to time and from place to place : yea, other meetings must part, and when they part, they may never meet again, and we that are here met, must part, and never all meet again, in time, even as some others that met together with us the last year, are away to eternity. But, O this meeting betwixt Mercy and Truth, Righteousness and Peace, it is a meeting where there is no parting, the meeting is from everlasting to everlasting, their meeting together, and kissing each other, is an eternal and unchangeable meeting, and an eternal and unchangeable kiss. It is every way like God, without beginning, without ending, and without succession. Whatever beginning, issue, or increase it hath with respect to its manifestation to us, yet in itself, it is still the same in Christ Jesus, *Who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, Heb. xiii. 8. without any variableness or shadow of turning.* The meeting never breaks up, it is a continued meeting, never to be dissolved, and there they kiss one another to all eternity, *for his mercy endureth for ever, and his righteousness to all generations ;* and because of truth, meekness and righteousness, in his majesty he shall ride prosperously, and of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end. I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever, and I

have said, truth shall be established in the heavens. Why, what is the meaning of all these expressions? The language is as if one glorious Attribute of God, should say to another, O! the sin of man set us all, as it were, at variance, and the whole creation knows not how to reconcile God with himself, if he shall save one sinner; but, behold, we having met together in Christ the Righteousness, the ransom, the atonement, the propitiation; having met together, we shall never part again, having embraced one another in behalf of you, poor miserable sinners, our arms shall never separate, that are clasped together. Mercy and Truth have met together, saying, you and I shall never part. Righteousness and peace have kissed each other, saying, you and I shall never sunder, nor suspend the embracement, neither death nor life, nor hell, nor devils, nor sin itself, shall ever separate us. It is a bargain among us, a divine match, they have met together by an everlasting covenant, sealed the bargain with an everlasting kiss, and cast a knot in an everlasting righteousness, which is the band of the union, even Christ, *for the covenant does stand fast with him*, Psa. lxxxix. 28. Where you will also see how this everlasting meeting is established in Christ, v. 14. *Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne*, or the establishment of thy throne, as it may be rendered, *and my mercy and truth shall go before thy face*, and v. 21. *with him my hand shall be established, and my faithfulness, and mercy shall be with him*, and v. 28. *My mercy will I keep for him forever*. Thus it is an everlasting meeting.

The fourth thing proposed, was, why, or for what reasons they have met together, and kissed each other? Why have the perfections of the glorious God conspired so harmoniously, and met together in such a sweet solemnity? Surely such a meeting as this must have noble designs in view, and I'll tell you these four reasons of the meeting, or four things that were to be concerted at this great assembly.

1. They met together, to concert measures for advancing the glory of God to the highest. This parliament of heaven met together upon ways and means, so

bringing in the greatest revenue of praise and glory to the crown of heaven, to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and all the glorious Attributes of this great and eternal God. These Attributes conspired harmoniously to set forth and glorify themselves most illustriously: They met together and kissed one another, that they might glorify each other. The glory of God was the first and last end of the meeting. What is the chief end of man, but to glorify God, and enjoy him for ever? And, O! What is the chief end of God? It is even to glorify himself in all his perfections, and to enjoy himself for ever: And how does God glorify himself most brightly? It is even in Christ the meeting place of these perfections, with a view to our redemption, *to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved*, Eph. i. 6. And how does he enjoy himself most sweetly? It is even in Christ, *Behold mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth. I was daily his delight*, says Christ, *whils my delight was with the sons of men*, Prov. viii. 30. They met together to put a crown of glory and honour upon each other. Adam's sins and rebellion, and your sin, man, woman, and my sin (O that God dishonouring evil, sin!) it had pulled off that crown of glory, as it were, from the head of the great King eternal and immortal, and casten it into the mire, and stained it with filth and dirt: But, behold, these Attributes of God meet together to take up the crown, and to rub off the dust and dung that sin had cast upon it.

THE
HARMONY
OF THE
DIVINE ATTRIBUTES.

From PSALM lxxxv. 10.

Mercy and Truth are met together, Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other.

AND to add some sparkling jewels to that than ever, and set it upon the head of their sovereign, to the highest praises of his mercy, justice truth, righteousness and grace, and love, and holiness, and wisdom and all his other excellencies; that men and angels might sing and say, *Glory to God in the highest, &c.* that all the saints may sing a concert, in praise of the meeting betwixt Mercy and Truth, Justice and Peace, saying, Psalm lxxxix. 14.

Justice and judgment of thy throne

Shall be the dwelling-place:

Mercy accompany'd with truth,

Shall go before thy face.

And that every saint might sing the fifty-seventh Psalm, and 9th and 10th Verses.

I'll praise thee 'mong the people LORD,

'Mong nations sing will I;

For great to heaven thy mercy is,

Thy truth doth reach the sky.

They met together to put a crown of Glory upon the head of Christ, Heb. ii. 9. in whom they met. This assembly did convene for the coronation of the Son of God; for, he having humbled himself, and become obedient

unto death, even the death of the cross, God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, Phil. ii. 10. That at the name of JESUS, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father. Christ hath glorified the Father, and therefore the Father glorified him, John xii. 31, 32. And now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him; and if God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself. Him that honoureth me, I will honour, says God: and in whom does this take place to perfection? It is in Christ; God is honoured most highly by him; and therefore he is honoured most highly of God. Amen, so let it be; and so shall it be — And therefore it is concerted in that meeting, that all the saints shall glorify him. Hence that royal edict comes forth, *He is thy Lord, worship thou him*, Psal. xlv. 11. And so we find them doing, Rev. v. 9. *Thou art worthy to take the book, and open the seals, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood* — It is concerted in that meeting, that all the angels shall glorify him. Hence the edict comes forth, *Let all the angels of God worship him*, Heb. i. 6. and so we them find doing, Rev. v. 11, 12. *I heard the voice of many angels, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousand of thousands, saying with a loud voice, worthy is the LAMB, that wast slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing*. — It is concerted in this meeting, *That all the creatures in heaven and earth, sea and land, shall glorify him, as we see, verse 13.* — But lest the sinful creatures upon earth, like you and me, should not glorify him or see his glory, it is concerted in that glorious meeting, that the Holy Ghost, the eternal Spirit, one God, equal in power and glory with the Father and the Son, shall be sent down to the earth to glorify him John xvi. 14. *He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shew it unto you,* O! hath the Spirit of God been shewing any thing of Christ among you this day! Any thing of his grace, fulness, righteousness, so as to

glorify him, and make him glorious above all things to you : Why then, we may reckon that you have found something of the saving fruits of this glorious meeting: For the grand design of it was to glorify God in Christ, by the Spirit. They met to concert all things relating to the glory of the Father, in the Son, by the Holy Ghost. They met to consult their own glory in Christ, that Mercy and Truth might be glorified in him.

2. They met together to concert their proper work, in carrying on this great end, of the glory of God, and his perfections : They do not meet together to sit idle, and do nothing ; No, they meet together to concert each of them their proper business, as Christ said to his friends, *Wherefore, was it that ye sought me ? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business ?* So may I say here, the Attributes of God met together, that they may to about God's business. What business ? What work belongs to each of them severally ? Why, Mercy and Truth meet together, that they may be sent upon an embassy together, Psal. lviii. 3. *God shall send forth his mercy and his truth*, his mercy to give in the promise of the gospel, and his truth to make out the same : Thus mercy and truth meet together, that they may be sent forth upon some gracious expedition, particularly, both to be leaders and followers to the remnant, whom God appointed unto life. On the one hand, to be leaders, hence the Psalmist cries, Psal. xliii. 3. *O send forth thy light and thy truth : let them lead me, and bring me to thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacle ; then will I go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy.* Behold, the wonderful business of mercy and truth, and the work they are sent out upon, even mercifully to lead blind souls to a God in Christ. On the other hand, it is to be not only leaders, but followers, Psal. xxiii. 6. *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.* If the child of God, under any temptation, refuse to be led by mercy and truth, and give up with them as his leaders, yet for all that, he shall not hinder them to be his followers ; he may run out of God's way, but mercy will follow and bring him back ; and when mercy follows, it is ay in company with truth ; And, O what

think you of this wonder? Mercy and Truth meet together, that they might go forth together, like two pages, to follow you, believer, through all the steps of your wilderness journey; *Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.* Here is a piece of work, that Mercy and Truth have met together; for, even to be sent forth as leaders and followers of poor elect sinners, till they be out of all hazard. *In Emmanuel's land, where glory dwells;* See Psal. lxi 7. but then, as Mercy and Truth have met together, to pursue their proper work, so Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other for pursuing of their's. Well, say you, what is the work of Righteousness and Peace? You have a word in the last verse of this Psalm, where our text lies, '*Righteousness shall go before him, and set us in the way of his steps.*' Divine righteousness displaying itself in Christ Jesus, the Son of Righteousness, goes before him to prepare his way, and bring us to God, and to our duty, and to be sure, whenever righteousness goes before, Peace will follow after; '*for the fruit of righteousness is peace, whether it be imputed or implanted:* Here then the work of righteousness and Peace kissing each other, is to bring in these blessed effects in their order; we consider them as divine perfections in the text, and in these effects, Righteousness leads the van, and Peace comes up in the rear.

3. These Attributes conspire harmoniously, they meet together and kiss each other, for this reason, that by their meeting together, they may concert the dissolving of some unhappy meetings. These opposite like Attributes of God meet together, that some intimates may be separate, and sad and sinful agreements may be broken up, Isa. xxviii. 15. *There is a sad meeting and agreement we read of, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell, are we at agreement.* Why, is not this the case of all men by nature? Yea; but how is this sad and miserable meeting dissolved? See verse 16. *Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation. Judgment also will lay to the line, and Righteousness to the plummet.* Well, when judgment and righteousness mercifully meet in Christ, the sure foundation, what will be the effect? It

follows, verse 17, 18. *The hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand.* Whatever sad aspect this scripture may have to the dis-pisers of Christ, yet it hath a merciful aspect to all the chosen of God, and all that desire to cleave to the Lord Jesus: yea, there is here a foundation of faith laid for all that hear the joyful sound, that whatever sinful and miserable meeting and agreements there are betwixt hell and them, betwixt death and them, yet it cannot stand before this glorious meeting, that was designed to break up and dissolve the opposite meetings, that stand in a contrariety thereto. There are many black unions which this blessed union does dissolve, and there is no dissolving of them, but by this blessed meeting. There is the black union betwixt the sinner and the law, which is the foundation of the black union betwixt the sinner and his sin: For, when the union betwixt him and the law is dissolved, then the union betwixt him and his sin is dissolved, according to Rom. vi. 14. *Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace.* Now, what is the covenant of grace? Why, Mercy and Truth meeting together, Righteousness and Peace kissing each other in Christ Jesus, is the substance, the marrow, the kirkel of the covenant of grace; and it is this blessed meeting, that dissolves the union betwixt the sinner and the law, and so betwixt the sinner and his sin. O! view the glorious design of this meeting! They met together that you might be separate from your sad associates; by nature you and the devil had met together, and you was a slave to him, and it is the virtue of this meeting in Christ, that dissolves that; *The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent.* The world and you had met together, and you took pleasure in your wicked companions, or else was wholly drowned in worldly affairs; O it is the faith of this meeting that dissolves that! *This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.* The curse of God and you had met together, and you lie under that curse, till in the faith of this meeting, you shall see, that Christ hath become a curse for us. This meeting is designed

for the breaking up of all these, and the like unhappy meetings. They met together in a glorious band, to loose all the knots that the devil had tyed.

4. These glorious Attributes of God, do conspire harmoniously; they meet together and kiss each other, that they might concert and carry on some happy meetings, and make up some blessed matches. These opposite-like Attributes harmoniously meet, that opposites, and irreconcilable things might meet together harmoniously, and kiss each other, whither real or seeming opposites.

1st, There are real opposites that meet together harmoniously, by virtue of this glorious meeting, particularly these six:

1. These opposite-like Attributes meet together harmoniously, that opposite natures might meet together, even that God and man might meet together, and embrace each other: And there are these two meetings betwixt God and man, that were concerted at this meeting, the one is the meeting betwixt God and man, in the hypostatical union of the two natures of Christ, our *Immanuel God-man, in one person*. This is the great mystery of Godliness, God manifest in the flesh, and this is the foundation of all other saving and merciful meetings betwixt God and man. The other is the meeting betwixt God and man in the spiritual union betwixt Christ and his members; in one mystical person, by the bond of the Spirit, for he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit; and this union is the foundation of all spiritual communion with God. We are not only at an infinite natural distance from God, as we are creatures, but at an infinite moral distance from him, as we are criminals and sinners: But the Attributes of God met together and kiss each other in Christ, that God and man might meet together, in a close spiritual union, and kiss each other in a sweet spiritual communion; whatever spiritual communion you have with God, believer, this day, it flows from this glorious meeting of the divine Attributes in Christ, and this union and communion is indeed a meeting of opposite natures: God became man, and took on our nature, and he makes us partakers of his nature, &c.

2. These opposite-like Attributes meet together and kiss each other, that opposite wills might meet, and embrace each other. God's will and ours are opposite; this is indeed a branch of the former, but our wills are the great sorts of corrupt nature, that stands out against God and his will: We are enmity against God, and not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. Now, how comes the will to be reconciled to God's will? It is only by Christ, in whom the perfections of God meet together: Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.

3. These opposite-like Attributes meet and kiss each other, that opposite persons, *Jews* and *Gentiles*, man and man, that were enemies and haters of one another, might meet together, that *Jews* and *Gentiles* might meet together, and men at variance with men might meet together; hence it is said of him, in whom the Attributes of God do meet. *He is our peace*, Eph. ii. 14. *who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition: Having abolished in the flesh the enmity, &c.* If any man slay the enmity to God or man, this is it.

4. These opposite-like Attributes of God meet and kiss each other, that opposite climates might meet together. I mean, that heaven and earth might meet together, the church militant, and the church triumphant. Heaven and earth were at variance by our sin, but now in Christ, saints in heaven, and saints in earth meet together. Hence we are said to become the general assembly, and church of the first-born, that are written in heaven, to the spirits of just men made perfect. All believers are said to be thus, *Come to mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem*, Heb. xii. 22. Yea, in Christ, angels in heaven, and men on earth, do meet together. Hence believers are said to be come to the innumerable company of angels; and the angel of the Lord encamps about them, &c. Yea all things in heaven and earth do meet together, and kiss each other in Christ the meeting place. Col. i. 20. *Having made peace by the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself; whether things in heaven or things in earth*, Eph. i. 10. See how upon the back of this meeting in the text, heaven and earth

are said to meet together in the following verse, *Truth shall spring out of the earth; and Righteousness shall look down from heavens;* which I insist not upon here.

5. These opposite-like Attributes of God meet and kiss each other, that opposite covenants might meet and embrace each other, even the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace, in Christ the meeting place of the divine perfections. These two covenants do, as it were, join hands and agree. Did the covenant of works command perfect obedience? and being broken, did it demand complete satisfaction? Behold Christ's obedience to the death answers both; God's covenant of grace dispensed to us, is just Christ fulfilling for us the covenant of works; and so in him they meet and kiss each other; *For he is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.* Again,

6. These opposite-like Attributes of God meet and kiss each other, that opposite thoughts might meet together, and embrace each other, even God's thoughts and our thoughts; how opposite these are you may see, *Isa. lv. 8. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor your ways my ways; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.* Some have presumptuous thoughts while they look only to God's mercy - and so they think, certainly God will have mercy on them, tho' yet they are strangers to Christ; these are opposite to God's thoughts, he hath no thoughts of shewing mercy that way. Others have despairing thoughts while they look merely or mostly to God's justice, and so their thoughts is, O, will God have mercy on the like of me! And he cannot in justice save the like of me! These thoughts are also opposite to God's thoughts; my thoughts are not your thoughts met together; why, let a man view the mercy and justice of God met together, and harmoniously kissing each other in Christ, so as to see God in Christ reconciling the world to himself. If your thoughts be spiritualized, to discern mercy venting thro' the sacrifice that satisfies divine justice, then God's thoughts and your thoughts meet together and kiss each other. Thus the divine Attributes meet together harmoniously, that real

opposites may meet together harmoniously. This glorious meeting lays a foundation for these happy meetings.

2dly, There are seeming opposites that meet together harmoniously, by virtue of this glorious meeting, as,

1. These opposite-like perfections of God meet together, and kiss each other harmoniously, that opposite-like providences might meet together, and kiss each other. There are frowning providences, and smiling providences, crosses and comforts in the believer's lot; here is a providence that favours the promise, and there is a providence that seems to contradict the promise; here is an up, and there is a down. Well, how shall these unite together? Why, they meet and embrace each other in Christ, the meeting place; *For all things work together for good to them that love him, and are the called according to his purpose.* Hence we will find not only light and darkness in the believer's lot, but sometimes light and darkness meeting together, Zech. xiv. 7. There you read of a day, that there is neither day nor night, yet a day known to the Lord, neither clear nor dark but at evening time it shall be light. There evening darkness ushering in the morning light. Hence they have occasion both to sing of mercy and of judgment; because of their meeting together, and kissing each other, and working together for good; behold the cross and the crown meeting together.

2. These opposite-like perfections of God meet together, and kiss each other, that opposite-like desires may meet, and embrace each other, while mercy desires our life, and justice seems to demand our death, these are reconciled only in Christ, in whom Mercy and Truth, Righteousness and Peace meet and embrace each other. But look to our own desire of God's glory, and our salvation, men and angels could never have contrived how these two desires could be reconciled, if mercy and truth had not met together, and kissed each other; for the glory of God's truth and righteousness, in the threatening of his law, seems to rest satisfied with nothing less than our destruction; and therefore to desire God's glory, would have been to desire our own damnation: and consequently in desiring our own salvation, we must have

desired God's dishonour: But now this blessed contrivance of infinite wisdom, lets us see how these two are not only reconciled, but made inseparable, *Having set forth Christ to be the propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness in the remission of sins.*

3. These seemingly opposite Attributes, meet and kiss each other, that seemingly opposite graces might meet and embrace each other: for example, reverence and confidence; how shall fear and reverence meet together with faith and confidence? Why, Truth and Righteousness are at the meeting, and therefore fear and reverence becomes us; but Mercy and Peace are also on the bench, therefore faith and holy confidence may boldly step in; *We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.*

4. These opposite-like Attributes meet and embrace each other, that opposite-like duties may meet together: Prayer and praise seem opposite duties in some cases; prayer supposes our wants to be great, otherwise, why should we pray? Praise supposes our enjoyments to be great, otherwise, why should we praise? Well, Truth and Righteousness, these awful Attributes, present at the meeting, say, We have nothing in ourselves, therefore we ought to pray; but Mercy and Peace say we have enough in Christ and therefore we ought to praise. Humiliation and gloriation seem opposite duties; but the seemingly opposite Attributes of God meeting together, bring also these duties to meet and embrace each other. Is Truth and Righteousness in the company with Mercy and Peace? Then humiliation is our duty; but is Mercy and Peace in company with Truth and Righteousness, then gloriation is our duty: *Let him that glories, glory in the Lord.*

5. These seemingly opposite Attributes of God meet and embrace each other, that seemingly opposite experiences may meet and embrace each other, and be reconciled, though seemingly irreconcilable. There are sad experiences, and sweet experiences: O! here is the sad experience of a guilty conscience a powerful corruption, and a conquering temptation; Can ever that be reconciled with the experience of holy peace, pardon and vic-

tory? Yea, here is a foundation laid for the reconciliation of these opposites: If Justice and Mercy have met together, then a guilty conscience, and a mercy-seat may meet together; a prevalent corruption and a pardoning purifying blood may meet together; as they did in the Psalmist's case, Psal. lxxv. 3. *Iniquities prevail against me: But as for our transgressions, thou wilt purge them away.* The sad experience of fatherly anger, or of the feeling of divine wrath, may meet with the sweet experience of felt love and favour; for Mercy and Justice are met together, Isa. liv. 7, 8. The sad experience of perplexing thoughts may meet with the sweet experience of spiritual consolation, and be swallowed up therein; since Truth and Justice have met with Mercy and Peace: Hence it was that these two met together in David, Psal. xciv. 19. *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul.* O! is such a sad experience consistent with an interest in Christ? Why, both terrible and amiable Attributes of God meet together in Christ; and therefore it is not strange, that the saddest and sweetest experiences meet together, so as not to be inconsistent with the state of a believer that is in Christ. To see awful Justice, and lovely Mercy meeting together in a sweet smelling sacrifice, is a greater wonder, than to see your saddest and sweetest experiences meeting in Christ, to make up a Hallelujah, *Praise ye the Lord*; and the former meeting is the reason of this.

6. These irreconcilable-like Attributes of God meet and embrace each other, that irreconcilable-like scriptures might meet together and embrace each other: How shall Exod. xxxix. 7. *He will by no means clear the guilty*, or justify the sinner, be reconciled with Rom. iv. 5. where he is said *to justify the ungodly*. O! how can these two opposites meet together? Why, Mercy and Truth have met together in Christ, to make up a match betwixt them: A ransom is found, a propitiation is set forth; why then, these opposite-like scriptures may meet together and kiss each other. *He will by no means clear the guilty*, without a ransom, a propitiation. Well, is the ransom found, and the propitiation set forth? then he will justify the ungodly on that ground; Deliver him

soul from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom. Now, he can justify the sinner, and be just in so doing, while he draws him into Christ by faith, Rom. iii. 25, 26.—Thus, you see the reasons of the meeting. In a word, they meet together upon a design to bring the greatest good out of the greatest evil, and the highest glory out of the deepest misery, to the praise of all God's glorious perfections.

The fifth thing proposed, was the application, in a few inferences. Is it so, that in salvation of sinners by Jesus Christ, the glorious Attributes and perfections of God do thus harmoniously conspire, and embrace each other? Then hence we may see,

1. What a dreadful evil sin is, which sets all the Attributes of God, as it were at odds, and puts all the world into confusion, and every thing out of order; it sets heaven and earth, and all things in them at variance, one against another. To think light of sin, is to think light of this glorious meeting of divine Attributes, that met together to break this rebellion, and take order with this horrid insurrection against heaven! O! what a great matter is the salvation of a sinner! Ere that can take place, this grand meeting must be called; all the injured Attributes of God must have an honourable reparation. Justice must be satisfied, Truth vindicated, Righteousness cleared; and in order to all this, a surety must be provided, even a God in our nature; the guilt must be imputed to him, and the iniquity of us all must be laid upon him; and then a bloody tragedy must be acted upon his soul and body, till he sink to death under the weight of infinite wrath. But,

2. Hence, see what a wonderful person our Lord Jesus Christ is, in whom so many wonders meet together: It is in him, that Mercy and Truth, Righteousness and Peace, do meet together, and kiss each other; here all the bright perfections of the divine nature do gloriously conspire; here is the bright constellation of all the divine Attributes shining forth in him, and every star performs its revolution in this orb. Behold in him the bright glory and excellency of God's grace and love, a whole Trinity in concert, to perform each person, his own part, and

each Attribute its own work, and Christ the image of the invisible God set forth to be a glorious theatre, on which men and angels might see the splendour of the transaction. *He is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person*; Here is the great mystery of Godliness, God manifested in the flesh, and all his Attributes meeting together and kissing each other, in our *Immanuel God-man*. There are two things meet in Christ, which should make him wonderful to us: The one is, all our sins meet together on him, that they may be condemned, according to that word, *Isa. liii. 6. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all*, or made them to meet on him; the other is, all the Attributes of God meet in him, that they may be glorified: And indeed there is no saving or satisfying knowledge of any property of God but what is to be had in Christ: to see God to be a merciful, just, true, righteous, good and holy God, is neither a saving nor a satisfying sight; unless we see these Attributes meeting in Christ for our salvation: and to see this, is to see the glory of God, in the face of Christ. Here see the glory of divine mercy! What is pardoning mercy? It is God's free, gracious acceptance of a sinner, upon satisfaction made to his justice in the blood of Jesus. Nor is there any discovery of mercy, but as relating to the satisfaction of justice, consistent with the glory of God: Mercy cannot be seen savingly, but as meeting with justice in Christ. Here also we see the glory of divine Truth, in the exact accomplishment of all his threatenings and promises; that original threatening and commination whence all other threatenings flow, *Gen. ii. 17. In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*, backed with a curse; *for cursed is every one that continues not in all things, &c.* is in him accomplished fully, and the truth of God therein cleared to our salvation, while he tasted death for us, and was made a curse for us; so that in every threatening his truth is made glorious; And as to the promises, they are all yea, and Amen in Christ Jesus, to the glory of God by us, *2 Cor. i. 20*. And so of all the other Attributes of God, they are made glorious and exalted in Christ to our salvation. Hence, when Christ desired his Father to glorify his

name, John xii. 28. to make his name, that is his nature, and properties, and perfections, all glorious in the work of redemption, that he had in hand; he was instantly answered from heaven, *I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again; I will give my Attributes their utmost glory in thee.*

3. Hence see the difference betwixt the law and the gospel; one great difference betwixt them lies in this, that in the law, the sinner that hath violated the same, may see Truth standing engaged against him, but no Mercy in company with Truth; and Righteousness in arms against him, but no Peace in company with Righteousness; Justice without Mercy, and war without Peace to the sinner, is the motto of the law: for therein Truth and Righteousness meet together, but Mercy and Peace are not at the meeting; and so the language of the law, to you that are out of Christ, and under the law is, No mercy, no peace, but the wrath of God, the vengeance of God, the curse of God upon you, and that so sure as God is a God of Truth and Righteousness; there is the law: But in the gospel, Mercy and Peace come into the meeting, and make up a match betwixt all the opposite-like parties, to the highest glory of God, and the greatest happiness of the sinner, and they seal the match with a kiss of infinite complacency; so that the sum of the gospel is this, *Mercy and Truth are met together, Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other.*

THE
HARMONY
OF THE
DIVINE ATTRIBUTES.

From PSALM lxxxv. 10.

Mercy and Truth are met together, Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other.

HENCE we may see what is the fountain-head, and foundation of all true communion and fellowship with God and man. This glorious meeting is the foundation of all other happy meetings: fellowship with God, and an happy meeting with him, is a stream that flows from this fountain. We could never have met with God, or got a kindly kiss or embrace in the arms of his favour and love, if this divine meeting and embracement, had not made way for it. Fellowship with man, or the communion of saints, is a rivulet that flows from this spring. When saints meet together for prayer or praises under the influence of the Spirit, and under a gale of heaven, when their hearts are fired with love to God, and to one another in him; What is this? It is just a live coal cast in among them, from the altar, Christ Jesus, where all the Attributes of God meet together, and kiss each other; and hence true fellowship with God, and with the saints, are both declared to be in and through Christ Jesus, 1 John i. 3. *That which we have heard and seen, declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us: And truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Christ.* The harmony of the Attributes of God in Christ, is the fountain of all the harmony among the saints: The little harmony that takes place among them in our day, and the rarity of holy fellowship meetings, flows from

the little faith of this heavenly divine meeting : For all the saints that are under the lively views thereof, cannot but desire to meet together, and embrace each other harmoniously, in the arms of mutual love.

5 Hence, see the malignity of the sin of unbelief, the great employment whereof is, to spoil the harmony of the divine perfections ; and to do its utmost to dissolve that glorious meeting, and separate what God hath joined, saying, in effect, they have not met together, nor kissed each other. This we may discern in the unbelief, whether of secure or awakened sinners : See it in the unbelief of the secure sinner, who sets Truth and Righteousness out of the meeting, saying, God is a merciful God, *and I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my own heart, adding drunkenness to thirst.* Thus they hope in God's mercy, and speak peace to themselves, while they never view the Truth and Righteousness of God, and how the credit thereof shall be salved, or the honour thereof repaired : And hence, as faith is said to set to the seal, that God is true, or that he is a God of Truth, so unbelief is said to make God a liar, to fancy that God will have mercy on their souls, without regarding the truth of his threatenings, is to make God a liar, and say, Mercy and truth have not met together ; to think that God will be at peace with them, while his Righteousness and justice are not satisfied, is to make God a liar, and say, Righteousness and Peace have not met together. Thus the unbelief of the secure sinner puts Truth and Righteousness out of the meeting.—Again, on the other hand, the unbelief of the awakened sinner, puts mercy and peace out of the meeting, saying, O ! He is a God of Truth, and how shall he have mercy on the like of me ? He is a God of awful justice and righteousness, and how will he be at peace with me ? What is the language of this ? But that mercy and peace have not met with truth and righteousness ; here is a making God a liar also, and separating what God hath in the gospel declared to be joined. Behold then, the malignity of unbelief, it breaks the glorious meeting, and will not let them kiss one another. The presuming sinner will not let God have the glory of his truth and righteousness.

The despairing sinner will not let God have the glory of his mercy and grace ; both are in a concert with the devil to break the harmony of the meeting. But O ! may virtue come from that glorious meeting in Christ, to the poor sinful meeting in this house, for dashing your unbelief to pieces, that we may see Mercy and Truth met together, Righteousness and Peace kissing each other.

6. Hence, see sure and noble ground, for the boldness and confidence of faith in Christ ; *In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him*, Eph. iii. 12. Here is an answer to all the objections of unbelief and diffidence, the chief whereof lies here ; O ! says unbelief, may I, sinful guilty I, grip to the promise of mercy and peace in the gospel ? When I see the great ordinance of the divine threatening hard charged with the Truth and Righteousness of God, and ready to be discharged against me, with shunder and lightening, saying, No Mercy, no Peace ; *He that made thee will not have mercy upon thee ; and there is no peace says my God, to the wicked* Mercy and Peace in the promise, then says unbelief cannot take place, with respect to me ; for Truth and Righteousness in the threatening, stand in the way, *like a flaming sword, to keep the way of the tree of life* : Nay, but says faith, here the promise and the threatening have met together, and kissed each other in Christ ; Mercy in the promise, and justice in the threatening have met and agreed in him ; *In whom all the promises are yea and Amen* ; and in whom all the threatenings are fully executed, by drawing out his heart blood. Thus then, *we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus*, Heb. x. 19. *By a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the vail of his flesh ; Therefore let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith*. O ! what ground for the boldness and assured confidence of faith, with particular application, notwithstanding of the threatening : The threatening hath nothing to say to me, faith faith, for Christ hath spoken with it already, and spoken it out of breath ; he hath left it speechless and breathless, not a breathing of wrath in it towards me. The believer may have a million of doubts, while his unbelief keeps the chair ; but let gallant faith

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The despairing sinner will not let God have the glory of his mercy and grace ; both are in a concert with the devil to break the harmony of the meeting. But O ! may virtue come from that glorious meeting in Christ, to the poor sinful meeting in this house, for dashing your unbelief to pieces, that we may see Mercy and Truth met together, Righteousness and Peace kissing each other.

6. Hence, see sure and noble ground, for the boldness and confidence of faith in Christ ; *In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him*, Eph. iii. 12. Here is an answer to all the objections of unbelief and diffidence, the chief whereof lies here ; O ! says unbelief, may I, sinful guilty I, grip to the promise of mercy and peace in the gospel ? When I see the great ordinance of the divine threatening hard charged with the Truth and Righteousness of God, and ready to be discharged against me, with shunder and lightening, saying, No Mercy, no Peace ; *He that made thee will not have mercy upon thee ; and there is no peace says my God, to the wicked*. Mercy and Peace in the promise, then says unbelief cannot take place, with respect to me ; for Truth and Righteousness in the threatening, stand in the way, *like a flaming sword, to keep the way of the tree of life* : Nay, but says faith, here the promise and the threatening have met together, and kissed each other in Christ ; Mercy in the promise, and justice in the threatening have met and agreed in him ; *In whom all the promises are yea and Amen* ; and in whom all the threatenings are fully executed, by drawing out his heart blood. Thus then, *we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus*, Heb. x. 19. *By a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the vail of his flesh ; Therefore let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith*. O ! what ground for the boldness and assured confidence of faith, with particular application, notwithstanding of the threatening : The threatening hath nothing to say to me, faith faith, for Christ hath spoken with it already, and spoken it out of breath ; he hath left it speechless and breathless, not a breathing of wrath in it towards me. The believer may have a million of doubts, while his unbelief keeps the chair ; but let gallant faith

come in, and take the room, it will dispel them all: Let once unbelief break the harmony of this meeting of divine Attributes in Christ, and then nothing but doubts of God's favour and mercy must ensue; but let faith view the harmony, and see them meeting and kissing each other; and then according to the measure of faith, such will be the measure of holy boldness, confidence, and persuasion of the favour, mercy and good will of God in Christ, with particular application to the person himself. Take away unbelief from faith, and then not a single doubt will remain behind: unbelief creates all the doubts that are in the believer; his faith hath no part in them. The general doubtful faith of the Papists, is not faith, but unbelief; and therefore no wonder that our fore-fathers abjured it in our national covenant. Behold the sure ground and firm bottom that faith stands upon, even the mutual meeting and embracement, among the divine perfections in Christ. If you break and separate the meeting by unbelief, then your confidence is broken, and your peace with God marred; but if you keep them together in your view, by faith in Christ, then you have boldness, confidence and affiance on this ground; yea, then God in Christ, and you meet together, and kiss each other.

7. Hence, see what is the best mark of a believer in Christ; for your trial and examination, try it just by this, what view have you got of this glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, and of the Attributes of God meeting and embracing each other in him? Have you seen the glory, and felt the virtue of this happy meeting?

1. Have you seen the glory of it? when once in a day, you had seen the Attributes of God in arms against you, because of your sinful rebellion against God; and when you had seen the truth of God, pronouncing the sentence of the law, and his righteousness and justice ready to inflict the sentence, and execute the same with curses and vengeance, making you despair of mercy, and give up with all hope and expectation of peace with God, by the law of works; Have you thereupon got a view of the harmonious meeting of these Attributes of God, in Christ Jesus, as the surety, the sacrifice, the ransom, the propitiation, in whom the truth and veracity of God is ac-

complished, and the righteousness and justice of God satisfied? and so mercy and peace vented gloriously, without detriment to any other excellency or perfection of God: Hath nothing satisfied your conscience but the view of this meeting betwixt Mercy and justice in the death of Christ, and kissing each other in his mediation? Hath God and you met together this way, and made your heart joyfully to kiss and embrace this wonderful device, as worthy of God and suitable to you? Have you seen this glory at this rate? Then in God's name, I pronounce you a believer in Christ: *For God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into your heart, to give you the light of the knowledge of his glory, in the face of Christ*; and Christ and you have met together, and kissed each other; whether it was in the day of first believing, when you fled to him for refuge, or in the day of after manifestation, when, upon the back of dismal hiding on God's part, or grievous backsliding on your's, the Lord drew aside the vail, and gave you a glance of his glory; whether it was by some word of grace, sweetly and powerfully coming in, and opening your understanding to see this harmonious meeting, or by some sweet droppings of the blood of sprinkling upon your conscience, by which blood, the meeting is cemented together. Have you seen this glory, whether in a secret corner, or public ordinance; whether at the market-cross of the gospel, where this glorious meeting is proclaimed, or at a communion table, where it is sealed? It is all a matter, it was heaven begun.

2. Have you felt the virtue, as well as seen the glory of this harmonious meeting of the divine Attributes in Christ? 2 Cor. iii. 18. *Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord*. Surely if you have seen this glory, you have felt something of this virtue, by changing you from glory to glory. It is true, many that have got a discovery of this glory of the Lord, can never think that they have felt the sanctifying virtue thereof, and this keeps them down in the pit of discouragement; It is true, they that are not sanctified and made holy, they discover, that they never beheld this glory of the Lord: for this meeting of

Attributes makes a meeting of graces, in the person that sees it savingly. But you must remember, that this virtue will never be perfectly felt, till this glory be perfectly beheld in heaven, where we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And therefore since you cannot judge and try yourself by a perfect sanctification, try it by the beginnings of it; this transforming virtue, this sanctifying virtue is present with you, though you cannot discern it. But that you may, thro' grace, discern something of it, let me ask you what makes you wrestle in secret sometimes against sin, if it be not some sanctifying virtue? What makes the prevalence of sin to humble you to the dust? What makes you lament your own unholiness and impurity? What makes you long and groan for complete victory over, and freedom from sin? What makes you glad of any victory over your corruption, when this glory shines? What makes your heart to rise against sin? and when sin prevails, what makes you find yourself uneasy, and out of your element, always till the Lord return, and until you get a new dip in the *Jordan* of the blood of the Lamb? You have no mercy on your lusts, and are at no peace with them, but still crying vengeance upon them! Why, it is just the sanctifying virtue, that flows from this view of the glory of God in Christ, in whom Mercy and Peace meet with Truth and Righteousness. If you fall and stumble at any time believer, is it not like the stumbling of a horse, that makes you run the faster? so as you get more good of one fall, than a natural man will get of a hundred duties, while it makes you ay the more humble and watchful, and circumspect and dependent. Why, by all this, it appears (whatever be the defect of your sanctification) that having beheld the glory of God, you are changed into the same image from glory to glory; you have seen the glory, and felt the virtue of this harmonious meeting of divine Attributes in Christ. But then again?

8. Hence, we may see ground of terror to all Christless unbelieving souls that never have seen the glory, nor felt the virtue of this harmonious meeting, and live careless about either of these. What shall I say? *If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost*; 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

Whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of th' glorious gospel of Christ should shine in to them. May be, you are presuming upon the mercy of God, while your eyes are blinded, that you do not see the truth of his threatenings standing against you: And therefore, O blasphemer! do you think, that he will be a God of mercy, and not a God of truth? Nay, his mercy will never be vented, unless the glory of his truth be saved. May be you are speaking peace to yourself, saying, I shall have peace, while yet your eyes are blinded, that you do not see how God's being at peace with a sinner is consistent with his righteousness, in taking vengeance upon sin. O then, blasphemer and presumer, do you think, that God will be a God of peace, and not a God of righteousness? Know it then, in the Lord's name, O sinful unbelieving wretch, that as there's no mercy for you, to the discredit of God's truth; so no peace to the dishonour of his righteousness. You expect mercy and peace separate from truth and righteousness; and therefore, mercy and peace shall be from you; and truth and righteousness will meet with you in fury, and with a vengeance. Your false hope of mercy and peace, makes you merciful to your lusts, and at peace with your idols: But the truth and righteousness of God, which you exclude from the meeting, will hide mercy and peace for ever from your eyes: Justice instead of mercy, war instead of peace will ensue; for truth and righteousness will execute judgment upon you for the abuse of mercy and peace; while through unbelief, you do not see, or approve their meeting together, and kissing each other in Christ. While you're in this case, you cannot meet with God, tho' you may meet with his people at ordinances, or at a communion-table; yet God and you never meet together: Nay, you have other company, the devil and you meet together; and your lusts and you embrace each other; the world and you meet together, and its vanities and you do kiss each other; the law and you have met together, and its curse and you do embrace each other. But because you do not see the terrible curses and threatenings that you are under, remember, that in a short while, death and you will meet together, and its cold arms and you must embrace each

other; and if this gospel be still hid to you, then after that, hell and you will meet together, and the flames of divine wrath and you will meet and you will embrace each other to eternity; and the *motto* written upon the door of your hell, will be, *The vengeance of Truth and Righteousness, for the abuse of Mercy and Peace.* Let this word of terror sink into your conscience, O graceless, Christless, unbelieving soul, that never saw the glory nor felt the virtue of this blessed meeting; and *Gallio-like, care for none of these things.* But on the other hand,

9. Hence, from this doctrine, see ground of comfort to all believers in Christ, who have seen the glory, and felt the virtue of this harmonious meeting of divine Attributes in Christ. This doctrine is as comfortable to you, as it is terrible to others. Can you say before God, that your two marks are your experience? Then I can say, that all the comforts, that issue from that glorious meeting in Christ, belong to you; and God allows you *strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to the hope set before you:* For that city of refuge, to which you have fled, is the center of the meeting, and the trysting place, where they kiss one another harmoniously. Why, say you, what concern have I in their meeting and embracing each other? O believer, they met together for your sake, and kissed one another out of love to you, for there was no real jarring among them; but all the apparant jarring was about you and how they should all be glorified in your salvation; and when infinite wisdom found the ransom, and saw the way to all your eternal happiness: Then they hugged each other in their arms, as it were in a rapture of joy, for your sake, Prov. viii. 21. *His delight were with the sons of men.* It was not one Attribute only that had its delight, satisfaction, and glory, its delights in the plural number: For all the Attributes of God had their lights, and whereabouts was it? Why, the counsel of peace was concerning you: *For his delight were with the sons of men.* And you having seen the glory of his device, and felt something of the virtue thereof: God and you have met together, and Christ and you have kissed each other; he hath embraced you, and have embraced him; and that embracement is a pledge and earnest, that he and you will meet together

in heaven, and embrace each other to eternity. This meeting and embracement is founded upon the harmonious meeting and embracement of the divine attributes in Christ: and therefore it shall be sure, abiding, and everlasting: and all these attributes are engaged for your comfort and support, and this glory of the Lord you shall for ever behold: for Christ in whom all these glorious perfections meet together, hath prayed for it, John xvii. 24. *Father, I will that these whom thou hast given me, &c.* Here then believers, is ground of comfort to you in every case. Comfort against desolation. Is it long since Christ and you met together, and kissed each other. Behold here is the reason: why, He will never altogether leave you nor forsake you; but certainly meet with you now and then, when he sees it fit; and give you the other kiss of his infinitely blessed lips, and embraces of his arms: till you come to the intimate and immediate embracements of his love in glory. Why, because mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other. So sure as mercy and truth are met together, as surely will the Lord meet with you. Here is comfort against the law, when it comes in as a covenant upon your conscience, saying, Pay what thou owest, or otherwise thou art cursed and must go to hell: and the law speaking in the name of truth and righteousness, seems terrible. But you may soon answer by faith, and say, *O law, the demand is just indeed, and agreeable to truth and righteousness have already met with mercy and peace, in the person of Christ my husband, who endured all my hell, and became a curse for me: and therefore, I have no ground to fear the hell thou threatens, nor the curse thou denounces, nor any liableness thereto.* Here is comfort against church-divisions and commotions; when neither ministers nor private Christians do meet together; or embrace one another with love and amity. Is this sad and afflicting to you? Here is a meeting that may give you comfort in that case: for no member of that meeting will ever differ among themselves, or cast out with you.—Here is comfort against your jarring with friends: What do I know, but there are some here, that cannot get lived in peace

with such a friend or relation; nor their Christian liberty enjoyed, because of their frowns, and, perhaps, they are as aliens to you, not in speaking terms with you: you cannot meet together with them *cordially*, nor embrace one another amicably: but let this be your comfort, for in that case mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other: and you have got a kiss by the bye, and that is better than all the kindness of all the friends in the world. Here is comfort against all the calamities that seem to be approaching or personal trials, that may be coming upon you. Here is a cordial, though affliction and you meet together: though, in a little, death and you meet together; yet this meeting of divine attributes in Christ our glorious Head, speaks comfort and safety to you in every case, though you should die distracted, this meeting cannot be dissolved, and you having seen the glory and felt the virtue thereof, shall be sure to enjoy the benefit of it to eternity; *yea, goodness and mercy shall follow you all the days of your life, and you shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.*

10. The last inference is, Hence see the duty of all that hear and know the joyful sound. Never was there a sweeter sound in heaven or in earth. And what is the duty of all you that hear it? surely the news of such a glorious and harmonious meeting of the divine perfection about the salvation of sinners in and by Christ Jesus, should be joyfully received. Here is the glad tidings of great joy to all people, *Luke ii. 10.* When *Elizabeth* the mother of *John*, and *Mary* the mother of *Jesus* our Lord met together, and saluted each other, the babe leapt in *Elizabeth's* womb for joy. Behold here is yet a more wonderful meeting and salutation among the jarring-like attributes and perfections of God; and surely if the babe of grace be in your womb it will leap for joy, when you perceive such a blessed meeting and salutation. O! may it bring our heart to our mouth, and make us flutter within us, when we hear such a salutation as this, *Mercy and truth are met together, &c.* What is your duty, believer, who not only hears but knows this joyful sound, your duty is not only to rejoice in this matchless harmonious con-

junction of divine attributes in Christ; but to exemplify the same by an harmonious conjunction of grace and holy virtues in you. Let mercy and truth meet together as divine attributes in Christ, be exemplified by mercy and truth meeting together as divine virtues in you: let righteousness and peace kissing each other in him, be exemplified by righteousness and peace kissing each other in you. Let the meeting of mercy and truth engage you to be merciful and true: *Merciful, because your heavenly Father is merciful; and true, because he desires truth in the inward parts.* Let the embraces of righteousness and peace engage you to be righteous and peaceable, that is, to be students of purity and peace; *For the wisdom that is from above, is first pure then peaceable, James iii. 17.* It is declare in the verse following our text, that is the design of these perfections of God, *looking down harmoniously from heaven, to make suitable graces spring up from the earth: Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven.*—When the sun of Righteousness, in whom all the excellencies of God do shine, looks down; then as the natural sun shedding its influence, makes fruit to spring up from the earth: so the sun of Righteousness looking down, and shedding abroad his influences, makes Truth and all the rest of the fruits of the Spirit to spring out of the earth, out of the heart, the soil where they are sown in regeneration. O! does mercy look down from heaven to you, in friendship with Truth? shall not this Mercy make you merciful to the bodies and souls of others, by doing them all the temporal and spiritual good that you can? And shall God manifest his Truth in conjunction with Mercy towards you? and will you not be a friend to Truth, even to all the precious Truths of his gospel? Shall not Truth, in opposition to hypocrisy be your study, and Truth in opposition to error, be your concern? and this Truth in conjunction with Mercy; for, when Truth is in any hazard, should not Mercy to your own soul, and the souls of others, make you zealous for it? And Mercy to your children, and the generation that is to come after you, on whom we show no Mercy, if Truth be not transmitted purely to them as it was by our forefathers to us at the expence

of their blood, however now the waters of the sanctuary are puddled. Again, does righteousness and peace look down from heaven, kindly embracing each other in your behalf, believer: and shall not you be student of Righteousness, in opposition to all unrighteous and unholy ways; and of peace, in opposition to contention and discord; *as much as possible follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.* Does God speak peace to you, and will ye be at war with him, and love to live in war with any of his? shall that be the disposition of any with whom God is at peace? *O tell it not in Gath!* Surely there are none here that have tasted of this sweet peace of God but they would desire to live at peace with all men, and particularly all the saints: they would desire to see all the honest ministers of Scotland meeting together more kindly than they do, and embrace each other. Some indeed are at this time reproached as enemies to peace in the church; but the matter is, Peace must not be studied separately from Righteousness, nor mercy separately from Truth; but all as meeting and embracing one another: for mercy and peace without truth and righteousness, is a cruel conspiracy against God and man. Now certain things have past concerning the truths of God, and the righteousness of Christ, in our day, which some think will stand infamous till doomsday; and this truth and righteousness being a great ministerial trust, some chused rather to be reproached by the world as enemies to peace, than be challenged by God and their own conscience as betrayers of the trust. However, O believer, study you, through grace, to get a match made up betwixt Mercy and Truth, Righteousness and Peace in you, seeing there can be no merciful peace to the prejudice of righteous Truth: and study to get all these Attributes of God exemplified in your heart and life: and the seal and impress thereof upon your souls; you being united to Christ, in whom all these glorious excellencies of God do meet together with harmonious embracements.—*Out of Christ's fulness do we receive, and grace for grace:* as the child receives members from the Father, and the paper letter for letter

from the press; so, beholding his glory, be you changed into the same image, by receiving Mercy for Mercy, Truth for Truth, Righteousness for righteousness, and Peace for Peace, out of his fulness do you receive grace for grace, holiness for holiness, and an holy virtue suitable to every holy perfection that is in him; and all these harmoniously meeting together, and kissing each other in you. Let no heavenly grace or holy duty be excluded out of the meeting. Let faith and repentance meet together, let love and new obedience kiss each other; let knowledge and practice meet together, and prayer and praises embrace each other; yea, let opposite-like graces meet harmoniously in you: let humility and boldness meet together: let godly sorrow and holy joy embrace each other. Here is the gospel-holiness we call you to in a suitableness to these harmonious Attributes of God in Christ: if the world call you *Antinomians*, know it is the will of God, &c. 1 Pet. ii. 15. Let the mouth that reproacheth the gospel, be stopped by the power of it in your walk. The world will surely reckon you the greatest stars that give the greatest light *therefore let your light so shine before men, that others seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven, by shewing out of a pure conscience the works of mercy, truth, righteousness, and peace, hand in hand together; and thus for the sake of the glory of God, the honour of Christ, and the credit of the gospel, let the world know, that you have seen the glory and felt the virtue of these perfections of God, harmoniously meeting and embracing each other in Christ.* Here is your duty and work, believer in the wilderness; and now in all your shortcomings therein, *still look again to God's holy temple, to Christ the meeting-place of these divine perfections: this is the mercy-seat of which God says, Exod. xxv. 21 There will I meet with thee, and commune with thee from between the cherubims:* and every meeting with God there, will bring in new strength for all you work and warfare in time, till God and you meet together and embrace one another in glory through eternity.

And now, believer, I know you would desire, That others should share of the same happiness with you, and therefore, pray that a short concluding word may be

blessed with power to thousands that hear me. O ye
 that are by-standers and hearers only, in whatever cor-
 ner of this house you be, round me, whether in my view
 or not, you are in God's view. I have a word from him
 to you all, what a terrible thing it is to live and die in
 unbelief with respect to this glorious device: may we kiss
 the SON of GOD in whom all these Attributes of God
 do kiss and embrace each other, Psal. ii. 12. Song i. 2. *Let
 him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for his love is
 better than wine.*—My heart says, O let him come and
 embrace me; and draw me out of the embracements of
 my former lovers and lusts; that I may never kiss any
 idol in the world: but may live and die in the arms and
 sweet embraces of the Son of God. Why then the em-
 bracement betwixt Christ and you is begun that shall ne-
 ver have an end, for it is a pledge that he and you shall
 meet together in heaven, and embrace each other to eter-
 nity.——O man, woman, lass, lad, unconcerned soul,
 be what you will, O yet will you come and see this great
 sight; O come and see the greatest sight that ever was
 or will be in heaven or earth,—*a bush burning and not
 consumed*;—all the burning and shining Attributes of
 GOD meeting together with infinite harmony in the
 bush of our nature, and yet the bush able to bear the
 glory, Zech. iii. 13.——O come and wonder, here is the
 wonder of men and angels; for this is a wonderful meet-
 ing to them: and the name of the meeting-place is justly
 called *WONDERFUL*!—*His delights were with the sons
 of men*! O come and sing to the praise and glory of him
 who caused this harmonious embracement of divine per-
 fections in Christ.——Glory to God, that there is no
 breaking of this meeting, nor parting of these embraces
 by sin, satan, earth, or hell; but that they meet and em-
 brace each other to eternity, and though you cannot
 mind to sing all that hath been said; yet I hope the
 weakest memory may mind to sing the best note of this
 sermon every day, saying, *Glory to God that Mercy and
 Truth have met together, Righteousness and Peace have
 kissed each other.*

THE END.

